# Geographic variation in Lycaena xanthoides 

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#### Abstract

Fifteen wing characters analyzed from seven populations, and larval foodplant information, are used to correct an error in the systematics of the Lycaena xanthoides group. L. x. xanthoides and L. x. editha, formerly considered separate species, are closely related and connected by intermediate populations. L. x. dione, previously considered conspecific with L. xanthoides, is the most distinct entity. These allopatric subspecies form a cline from L. $x$. dione to $L$. $x$. xanthoides to several populations in California intermediate between L. $x$. xanthoides and $x$. editha to $x$. editha from California-Oregon to $x$. editha from the Rocky Mountains. The major gap in the cline is between $x$. dione and $x$. xanthoides. The cline is horseshoe-shaped, with the most distinct entities parapatric (but altitudinally separated) along the eastern edge of the Rocky Mountains.


## Introduction

In 1974 I collected a series of Lycaena from northern California which seemed intermediate between xanthoides xanthoides and $x$. editha. In attempting to place this series I found that an error has been perpetuated in the systematics of the group. I will attempt to show that xanthoides and $x$. editha, previously considered separate species, are closely related and connected by intermediate populations, and that $x$. dione, previously treated as a subspecies of xanthoides, is much more distantly related.

Characters studied include male and female genitalia, the eleven wing pattern characters listed and described in the explanation for Fig. 1 , the position of the submarginal brown spot in cell $\mathrm{Sc}+\mathrm{R}_{1}$ on ventral hindwing, forewing shape, and the uniformity (solid versus lighter centers) of ventral hindwing median and basal spots.

## Results

Genitalia. 54 dissections of male and female genitalia were made of all entities of the group, but the only difference found was a general increase in robustness of genitalia as size increases from "montana" to editha to intermediate populations to xanthoides to dione. Valvae and sterigmae are too variable individually to detect differences, and the valval process usually differs as much between right and left valvae as between individuals.

Wing pattern. Fig. 1 plots most wing characters. The x. dione, $x$. editha, and $x$. "montana" samples are from several locations each, which were combined in Fig. 1 when found to have the same wing pattern.
The series from Dunsmuir in northern California is intermediate between $x$. editha and $x$. xanthoides in every trait by which the two are distinguished: in wing length, in size of ventral hindwing spots, and in thickness of submarginal white band on ventral hindwing (this character is of little value because it varies somewhat between $x$. xanthoides populations). The Dunsmuir series has a slightly less well developed red marginal band on dorsal hindwing, a character which does not differ appreciably between $x$. editha and $x$. xanthoides.
The series from near Mather on the western slope of the Sierra Nevada in central California, is also intermediate between $x$. xanthoides and $x$. editha (Fig. 1). It is intermediate in wing length, and is also intermediate in ventral hindwing postmedian spot size except that the maritime Point Richmond $x$. xanthoides population approaches it in spot size. The submarginal white band on ventral hindwing is thicker than in most $x$. xanthoides populations. The smallest and most heavily spotted male from near Mather (collected September 4) was reported as editha by Shields (1966), who reported the other intermediate specimens (collected 24 June to 1 August) as xanthoides. The very late September date of the former specimen may mean that it flew down from higher altitude in Yosemite Park to the east, where numerous $x$. editha populations occur.

The previous classification, which grouped $x$. xanthoides and $x$. dione into xanthoides, and $x$. editha and $x$. "montana" into another species (editha), is wrong because $x$. editha and $x$. xanthoides are much more similar to each other than either is to $x$. dione. L. $x$. xanthoides and $x$. editha differ basically by only two characters. L. $x$. dione differs from $x$. editha and $x$. xanthoides in eight characters: it 1) has more black spots on margin of ventral hindwing, 2) has more red lunules there, 3) has more red lunules on margin of ventral forewing, 4) has the red band on margin of dorsal hindwing slightly better developed and thicker, 5) and has a whiter ground color of ventral hind wing. 6) The submarginal ventral hindwing brown spot in cell $\mathrm{Sc}+\mathrm{R}_{1}$ seems to be closer to wing base than the same spot in cell Rs in $x$. dione, but is usually equal to or farther from base in $x$. xanthoides and $x$. editha. 7) The ventral hind wing median and basal spots have lighter centers in $x$. xanthoides and $x$. editha, but are solid black in $x$. dione. 8) The male forewings seem more rounded in dione than in the others.
L. ... "montana" differs slightly from $x$. editha in having slightly smaller wing length, slightly larger ventral postmedian spots, slightly fewer black spots and red lunules on margin on ventral hindwing, and slightly greater extent of red on margin of dorsal fore- (females) and hindwing and of orangish flush on female dorsal forewing.

The three $x$. xanthoides samples differ somewhat from each other. The Point Richmond sample was collected within 100 meters of the sea of San Francisco Bay, and differs in several traits from inland samples: it is somewhat larger, has slightly larger postmedian spots on ventral hindwing, has a somewhat thinner white submarginal band on ventral hindwing (like $x$. dione), has a somewhat browner ventral ground color, and hias slightly greater orange flush on ventral forewing. It is slightly more similar to $x$. editha than are the other two $x$. xanthoides samples. The few inland northern California samples examined appear more similar to southern California populations.
Except for local trends, the geographic variation within this group shows a cline from $x$. "montana", to $x$. editha, to the California populations intermediate between $x$. editha and $x$. xanthoides, to $x$. xanthoides, and finally to $x$. dione. A roughly clinal pattern is shown by these characters: wing length, width of postmedian-median ventral hindwing spots, number of red lunules and width of white band on ventral hindwing margin, color of ventral hindwing, and number of red lunules on margin of ventral forewing. The two most different members are $x$. "montana" and $x$. dione, and the major gap in the cline is that between $x$. xanthoides and $x$. dione. L. x. xanthoides and $x$. dione are separated by almost 2000 km at present, although I think that in Pleistocene or earlier time intermediate populations probably occupied Arizona, New Mexico, or Mexico. The cline is therefore horseshoeshaped, and the two endpoints are now parapatric but altitudinally separated from Colorado to Montana.

[^0]L. x. xanthoides. OREGON: Benton, Jackson, Yamhill; CALIFORNIA: San Diego, Los Angeles, Kern, Inyo, Riverside, Mendocino, Orange, Monterey, Tulare, Contra Costa, Lake, Marin, Stainislaus, Santa Clara, Alameda, Tuolumne, Sonoma, Solano, San Mateo. BAJA CALIFORNIA NORTE: just south of Calif.
L. x. dione. COLORADO: Larimer, Weld, Morgan, Logan, Sedgwick, Phillips, Yuma, Boulder, Jefferson, Denver, Adams, Arapahoe, Douglas, Elbert, El Paso, Fremont, Pueblo, Kit Carson, Bent, Prowers; WYOMING: Campbell, Bighorn, Sheridan, Johnson, Crook, Converse, Platte, Albany; MONTANA: Glacier, Prairie, Custer, Lewis \& Clark, Sweetgrass, Cascade, Chouteau, Stillwater, Carbon; NORTH DAKOTA: Bottineau, Cass, Grand Forks, McKenzie, Pembina, Slope; SOUTH DAKOTA: Lawrence, Codingion, Harding, (Marshall or Roberts); NEBRAぶKA: Dawes, Sheridan, Deuel, Platte, Dodge, Kearney, Adams, Fillmore, Douglas, Saunders, Seward, Lancaster, Nuckolls, Thayer, Jefferson, Gage, Johnson, Nemaha, Pawnee, Richardson, Saunders; KANSAS: Scott, Riley, Johnson, Pottawatomie, Greenwood, Douglas, Franklin, Marion; OKLAHOMA: Rogers, Cleveland, Craig; MISSOURI: Jasper, Randolph, Johnson, Cass, St. Clair, Clay, Morgan, Carroll, Livingston, Lafayette, Buchanan, Saline, Jackson, St. Charles, Holt, Vernon; IOWA: Guthrie, Story, Linn, Pottawattamie, Johnson, Woodbury, Winneshiek; MINNESOTA: Hennepin, Rock, Houston, Wabasha, Polk, Aitken, Big Stone, Winona, Pipestone, Redwood, Goodhue, Scott, Dakota, Lac Qui Parle, Kanabec, Clay, Lake, Sherburne, Carlton; WISCONSIN: Grant, Eau Claire, Milwaukee, Marquette, Burnett, Dane, Door, Pepin, Chippewa, St. Croix; ILLINOIS: Mercer, Madison, Henderson, McDonough, Pike, McLean, LaSalle, Kane, Lake, Cook, DuPage, Grundy, Putnam, Marshall, Peoria, Livingston, Ford, Champaign, Shelby, Cass; MANITOBA: Victoria Beach, Winnipeg, Silver Height, Brandon, Housavick, Rosebank, Beulah, Birtle, Miniota, near Transcona; SASKATCHEWAN: Punnichy, Saskatoon, Lloydiminster, Tantallon, Fort Qu'Appelle; ALBERTA: Johnson Creek near Plateau Mtn., vic. Medicine Hat, Lethbridge, Calgary, Wainwright, Edmonton, Crows Nest Pass, Tilley, head of Pine Creek, Waterton area.

Interdigitation of ranges. L. $x$. editha occurs at higher altitude than $x$. xanthoides and $x$. dione, so that in some cases $x$. editha and one of the other subspecies occur near each other in mountains versus lowlands. L. $x$. editha and $x$. dione occur in the same county in Montana ( 2 counties), Wyoming ( 5 counties), and Colorado (1 co.), but never occur together at the same locality, because of altitudinal separation. L. $x$. xanthoides and L. x. editha are also altitudinally separated where their ranges interdigitate in southern Oregon and California (both occur in Jackson Co. Ore.). In northern California x. xanthoides occurs below 1000', whereas in the southern Sierra Nevada it occurs at higher altitudes.

Immatures. No differences between the species other than size have been found among eggs, larvae, or pupae as yet. L. x. dione eggs are larger with coarser sculpturing than eggs of $x$. editha. Comstock \& Dammers (1935) found that $x$. xanthoides larvae are quite variable in
color, and Skinner (1893) found no obvious difference between larvae of $x$. dione and L. hyllus (Cramer).
Hostplants. It has been thought that $x$. xanthoides larvae eat Rumex, whereas $x$. editha larvae eat Potentilla. However, the Potentilla records for $x$. editha are dubious; it also eats Rumex. L. x. xanthoides hosts include Rumex hymenosepalus (Comstock \& Dammers 1935), Rumex sp. (Scott \& Opler 1974, reported erroneously as $R$. hymenosepalus), R. pulcher (Emmel \& Emmel 1973), R. crispus and R. californicus (both larvae reared, Idyllwild, Riverside Co. Calif., John F. Emmel, pers. comm.), and both R. crispus and R. conglomeratus (Shapiro 1974). Hemizonia sp. (Tietz 1972) is an error because it is not listed in either of te sources Tietz cites. L. x. dione hosts include Rumex obtusifolius (Forbes 1960; Leussler 1938-1939), R. salicifolius triangulivalvis (ovipositions Red Rocks, Jefferson Co. Colo., 12 July 1973, J. Scott), R. occidentalis (oviposition 2 mi. N. Idledale, Jefferson Co. Colo., 1977, J. Scott), R. crispus (oviposition 2 mi. N. Idledale, 1977, J. Scott), R. "longifolius" (Skinner 1893; Tietz 1972 cites this record under the name $R$. occidentalis), and "blunt-leaved dock" (Hooper 1973). L. x. editha hosts include Rumex acetosella (ovipositions Toll Ranch, Gilpin Co. Colorado, 27 July 1977, J. Scott; oviposition Jim Creek, Grand Co. Colo., 9 August 1977, J. Scott; oviposition California, Emmel \& Emmel 1974), R. gracilescens (Tilden 1959), R. paucifolius (Garth \& Tilden 1963), Polygonum phytolaccoides (oviposition Donner Pass, California, A. Shapiro pers. comm.). Both Rumex and Polygonum are Polygonaceae. Records of Potentilla (Horkelia) fusca (oviposition on leaves, Lembert 1894) and Potentilla tenuiloba (Comstock 1927) are old and somewhat dubious in view of the behavior of females in crawling down a hostplant stem and laying eggs haphazardly on or near stems or trash nearby.

## Discussion

I treat $L$. $x$. xanthoides and $x$. editha as conspecific because: 1) they differ only by two wing characters (one or both of which might be influenced by temperature); 2) the Dunsmuir and Mather populations which are intermediate, indicating the probability of gene flow between the two; and 3) they both use Polygonaceae as larval hosts. L. x. dione could be considered a separate species because it is the most distinct entity, but I treat it as a subspecies of xanthoides because previous authors have done so (Clench 1961) and because it forms one end of a cline involving the other entities. The Rocky Mountain $x$. "montana" differs slightly from $x$. editha as noted above, and forms the other end of the cline. Because "montana" is less distinct than the other three
entities I prefer to treat it as a synonym until more complete studies of geographic variation are made of $L$. $x$. xanthoides and $x$. editha. Some persons may wish to consider "montana" a valid subspecies. $L$. $x$. "luctuosa" Wats. \& W. P. Comstock, named from Tehachapi, California, I treat as a synonym of xanthoides for the same reason. The name luctuosa may be useful when the geographic variation within $x$. xanthoides is better studied and a specific type locality for xanthoides is designated. The following treatment is suggested.

## L. xanthoides

a. $x$. dione Scudder 1868
b. x. xanthoides (Boisduval) 1852
luctuosa (Watson \& W. P. Comstock) 1920
c. $x$. editha (Mead) 1878
montona Field 1936
It would be of great interest to know the effect of temperature on the wing pattern of xanthoides. The smaller and more heavily spotted $x$. editha might result partly from its higher altitude environment when compared to lowland $x$. xanthoides. The maritime Point Richmond $x$. xanthoides might be influenced by climate as well. Other California butterflies such as Phyciodes campestris are known to differ with altitude in part due to environmental causes (A. Shapiro pers. comm.).
It is of interest that Johnson \& Balogh (1977) in describing L. rubidus ferrisi as a distinct species, justified this in part by stating that the differences between $L$. rubidus (Behr) and L. r. ferrisi are as great as those between $x$. xanthoides and $x$. editha. This paper shows that the comparison can no longer be used as justification. I dissected a series of $r$. ferrisi collected by Kilian Roever and found very little difference between it and rubidus (or xanthoides) in either male or female genitalia. The valvae are variable and very similar although $r$. ferrisi has slightly shorter valvae which can be seen only by using measurements or by placing the two side-by-side. Several wing pattern differences were noted, although one $r$. ferrisi lacks the ventral forewing orange flush considered diagnostic, and other $r$. ferrisi have the wing shape of rubidus rather than the shorter wing shape considered diagnostic of $r$. ferrisi.

Three apparent interspecific hybrid Lycaena were found during this study and indicate that mating occurs successfully between entities more different than are the subspecies of xanthoides or rubidus. David Wagner caught an apparent $\mathrm{F}_{1}$ hybrid between $L . x$. dione and L. rubidus in the foothills west of Fort Collins, Larimer Co. Colorado. Marc Epstein caught an apparent $\mathrm{F}_{1}$ hybrid between L. x. editha and
L. rubidus at Rabbit Ears Pass, Routt Co. Colorado. The Los Angeles County Museum has a female from Castella, Shasta Co. California, July 1903 (J. A. Comstock collection) in which the underside resembles a very heavily marked $L$. heteronea gravenotata Klots but the upperside resembles a partly orange female $L$. rubidus (heteronea females lack orange). Considering that rubidus does not occur in the area (except for one dubious specimen labeled "Mt. Shasta"), and that heteronea occurs there only as ssp. L. h. heteronea Boisduval, it probably represents a hybrid between $L$. h. heteronea and another Lycaena, possibly an $L$. xanthoides intermediate population like at Dunsmuir only a few km to the north, or $L$. nivalis (Boisduval).
One female from Point Richmond has 6 large submarginal blue spots on each wing. This is significant in showing that the ability to produce blue (which reflecis ultraviolet) is present in the gene pool of this species, which is otherwise nonreflective in uv. Ultraviolet reflection is frequent in other Lycaena (Scott 1973). Orange flush on ventral forewing was not found in $x$. dione in this study although Clench (1961) states that occasional individuals have it.

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## Appendix

Localities and Characters Studied: The sample of $x$. dione is from Colorado (21), Iowa (3), Alberta (1), Missouri (6, coll. R. Heitzman); others from Colorado (60) and Iowa (1) were examined but not included in Fig. 1. $L$. x. xanthoides are from San Diego Co. California (29, coll. O. Shields and R. Breedlove), near Techachapi, Kern Co. California (2), Glacier Lodge, Inyo Co. Calif. (1, coll. C. L. Hogue), Havilah, Kern Co. Calif. (1, coll. O. E. Sette), Greenhorn Mts., Kern Co. Calif. (2, M. L. Walton), Big Pine Meadow, Tulare Co. California (15), Point Richmond, Contra Costa Co. Calif. (28). Others from northern California (12) and Point Richmond (114) were examined but not included in Fig. 1. L. x. xanthoides-editha intermediates are from Railroad Park, 2250 ft ., Dunsmuir, Siskiyou Co. California, 23 June 1974 (17), and from the vicinity of Mather (most 1 mi. east), Tuolumne Co. Calif. (20, coll. O. Shields), about 4600 ft . L. x. editha from Klamath Co. Ore. (5), Siskiyou Co. Calif. (4), Shasta Co. Calif. (9), Plumas Co. Calif. (9), Sierra Co. Calif. (1), Tehama Co. Calif. (1), Tuolumne Co. Caif. (2), Madera Co. Calif. (3), all coll. by O. Shields, D. Dirks, T. Preston Webster. 148 others from Inyo, Placer, Modoc, Tehama, Siskiyou, Shasta, Mono, Alpine, Tuolumne, and Nevada Cos. California, and Wallowa, Crook, and Klamath Cos. Oregon, were examined but not included in Fig. 1. L. x. "montana" are from Ravalli Co. Mont. (7), Cascade Co. Mont. (4), Sheridan Co. Wyo. (3), Yellowstone Park Wyo. (3), Moffat Co. Colo. (4), Routt Co. Colo (1), Grand Co. Colo (14), Gilpin Co. Colo. (13). Most were collected by myself unless otherwise noted. Some are from the Los Angeles County Museum.


Fig. 1 Histograms showing the number of individuals of each sex which have each character state. Character states are (characters from left to right): 1) length of right forewing ( mm ) ; 2) width ( mm ) parallel to wing veins of ventral hindwing postmedian brown spot in cell $\mathrm{M}_{2}$ (in intervals of .4 mm starting with $0, .4, .8,1.2$, $1.6,2.0) ; 3$ ) number of spots on margin of ventral hindwing which are black rather than brown (from 0 to 6); 4) number of red lunules on margin of ventral hindwing (from 0 to 5 ); 5) thickness of submarginal white band capping the marginal spots on ventral hindwing (1-very thin, about .3 mm thick; 2 -thin, about .5 mm thick; 3 thicker, about .8 mm thick; 4 -thick, about 1.2 mm thick; 5 -very thick, more than 1.5

mm thick); 6) ground color of ventral hind wing (1-whitish gray; 2 -whitish tan; 3tan; 4-light brown); 7) degree of orange flush on disc of ventral forewing (1-no orange or ochre flush; 2 -ochre flush; 3 -orange-ochre; 4 -mostly orange); 8) number of red lunules on ventral forewing margin (from 0 to 3); 9) number of red spots on dorsal forewing margin (red spot in cell 2 A not counted) (from 0 to 4); 10) extent and thickness of dorsal hindwing marginal reddish band (1-absent; 2 -only a few thin lunules; 3 -longer but thin; 4-long and thick; 5-long and very thick); 11) extent of orange-ochre flush on dorsal forewing ( 1 -absent; 2 -several spots; 3 -about 6 spots; 4 half of wing orange-ochre). Means for the first two characters are given (male mean above, female mean below).


[^0]:    Distribution (county records only for the U.S.) L. x. editha. ALBERTA: southern foothills, Calgary-McLeod area; COLORADO: Moffat, Routt, Grand, Gilpin, Jackson, Larimer; WYOMING: Sheridan, Park, Bighorn, Johnson, Teton, Sublette, Fremont, Lincoln, Converse, Platte, Albany, Yellowstone Nat. Park; MONTANA: Ravalli, Flathead, Missoula, Granite, Lewis \& Clark, Cascade, Chouteau, Jefferson, Gallatin, Sweetgrass, Beaverhead, Madison, Carbon, Lake, Stillwater, Mineral, Broadwater, IDAHO: Clearwater, Shoshone, Adams, Latah, Idaho, Lemhi, Fremont, Custer, Clark, Bear Lake, Valley, Boise, Ada, Elmore, Blaine, Cassia; UTAH: Salt Lake, Summit, Cache, Rich; NEVADA: Elko, Washoe, Storey, Ormsby; WASHINGTON: Walla Walla, Columbia; OREGON: Klamath, Morrow, Crook, Umatilla, Wallowa, Union, Baker, Wheeler, Grant, Lake, Lane, Harney, Jackson; CALIFORNIA: Siskiyou, Shasta, Plumas, Sierra, Tehama, Tuolumne, Madera, Inyo, Alpine, Nevada, Placer, Mariposa, Modoc, Mono, Tulare.

